"LINES OF ALLEGIANCE: PART TWO CROSSING THE LINE"

DEMONA HAS FOUND THE LEGENDARY FEALTY ROSE, A MAGICAL BLOOM THAT ENSLAVES ANYONE TOUCHED BY ITS SILVERY PETALS!

SHE HAS ALREADY ENSLAVED XANATOS, ELISA MAZA AND THE GARGOYLE CLAN--ALL BUT BROADWAY AND BRONX!

NOW SHE STAGES A VICIOUS BATTLE!

HE IS YOUR ENEMY, GOLIATH! CRUSH HIM!!

HE'S NOT TRYING HARD ENOUGH! I CAN'T PROCEED WITH MY PLANS UNTIL I'M SURE OF GOLIATH'S LOYALTY!

EVEN UNDER THE SPELL OF THE ROSE HE'S FIGHTING ME!

THEN AGAIN, HIS HATRED FOR XANATOS SHOULD OVERCOME THAT.

TOO BAD FOR XANATOS...

Editor's Note: WHEN THIS STORY TAKES PLACE, GOLIATH AND XANATOS ARE STILL ENEMIES.

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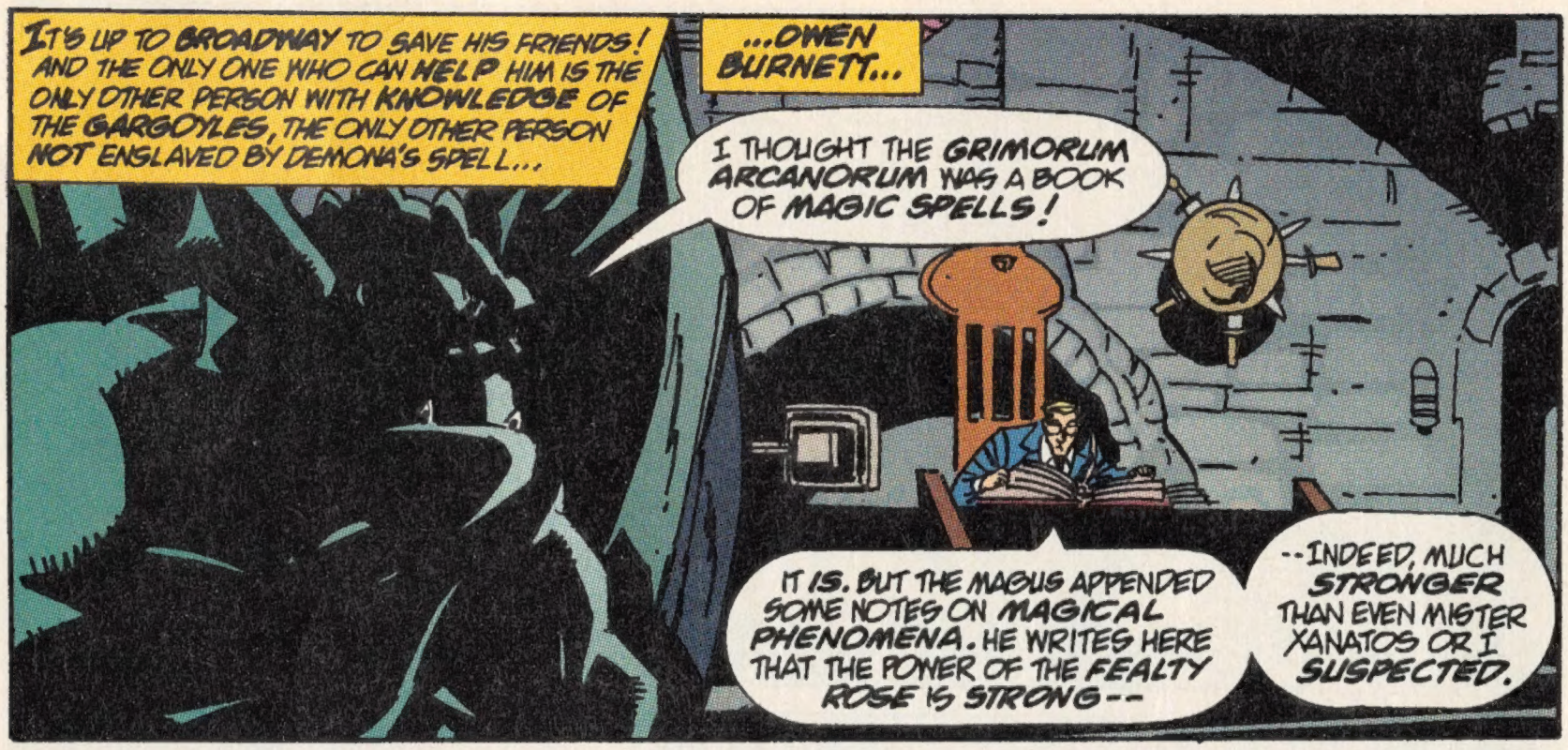
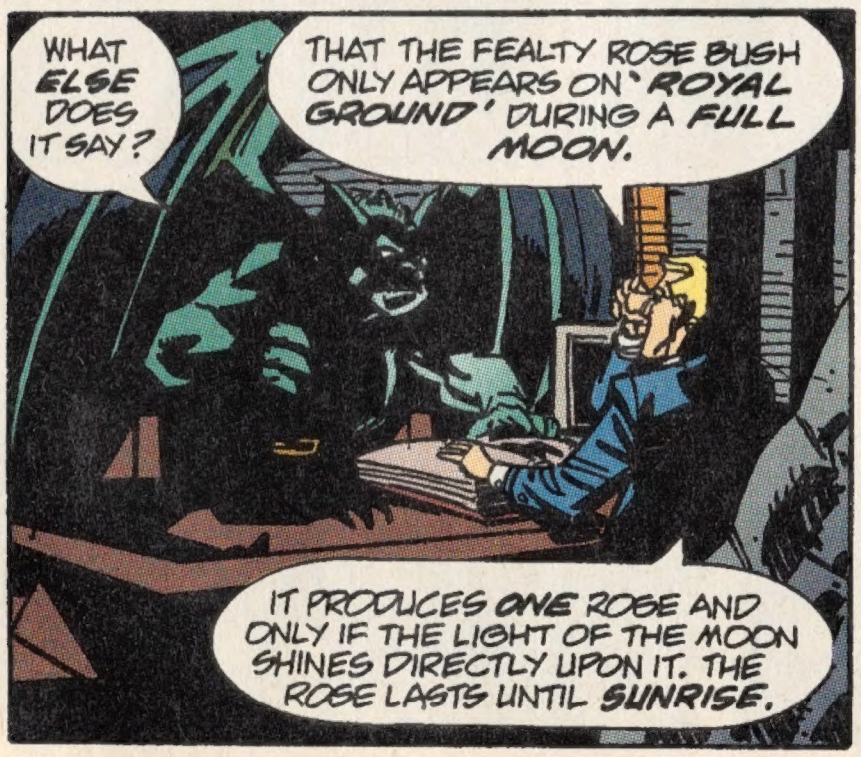
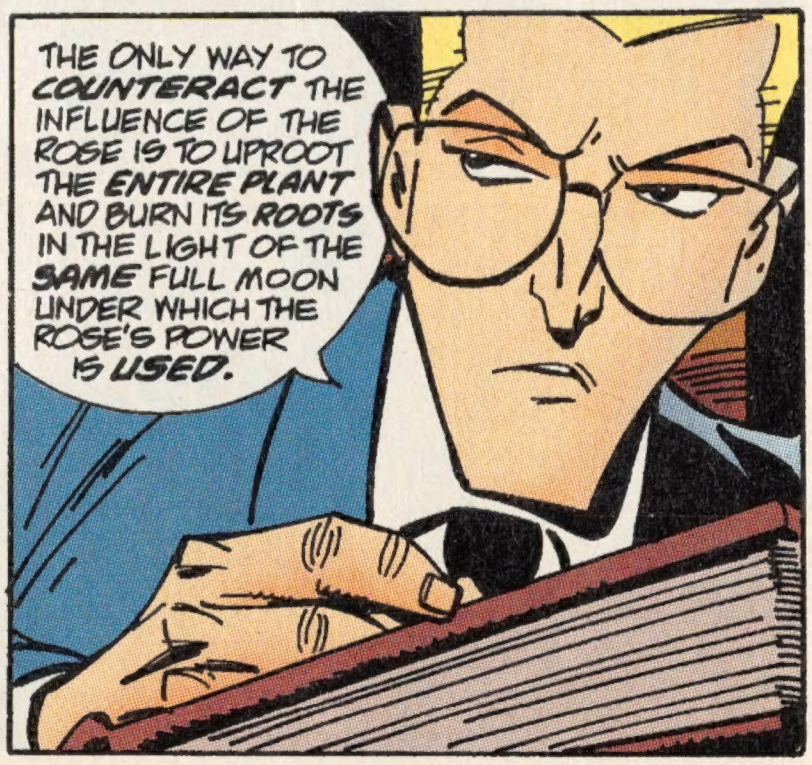

IT'S UP TO BROADWAY TO SAVE HIS FRIENDS! AND THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN HELP HIM IS THE ONLY OTHER PERSON WITH KNOWLEDGE OF THE GARGOYLES, THE ONLY OTHER PERSON NOT ENSLAVED BY DEMONA'S SPELL...
...OWEN BURNETT...
I THOUGHT THE GRIMORUM ARCANORUM WAS A BOOK OF MAGIC SPELLS!
IT IS. BUT THE MAGUS APPENDED SOME NOTES ON MAGICAL PHENOMENA. HE WRITES HERE THAT THE POWER OF THE FEALTY ROSE IS STRONG--
--INDEED, MUCH STRONGER THAN EVEN MISTER XANATOS OR I SUSPECTED.

THOSE TOUCHED BY THE ROSE BECOME ETERNALLY LOYAL TO THE ROSE WIELDER.
DEMONA OBVIOUSLY KNEW THIS AND STRUCK HER DEAL WITH MISTER XANATOS, INTENDING TO ENSLAVE HIM ALL ALONG.

MAYBE SHE WANTS TO USE HIM AGAINST GOLIATH!
OR VICE VERSA. WE DON'T KNOW WHO WAS ENSLAVED FIRST, OR WHAT COMMANDS DEMONA HAS GIVEN THEM THUS FAR, IF ANY.


WHAT ELSE DOES IT SAY?
THAT THE FEALTY ROSE BUSH ONLY APPEARS ON 'ROYAL GROUND' DURING A FULL MOON.
IT PRODUCES ONE ROSE AND ONLY IF THE LIGHT OF THE MOON SHINES DIRECTLY UPON IT. THE ROSE LASTS UNTIL SUNRISE.

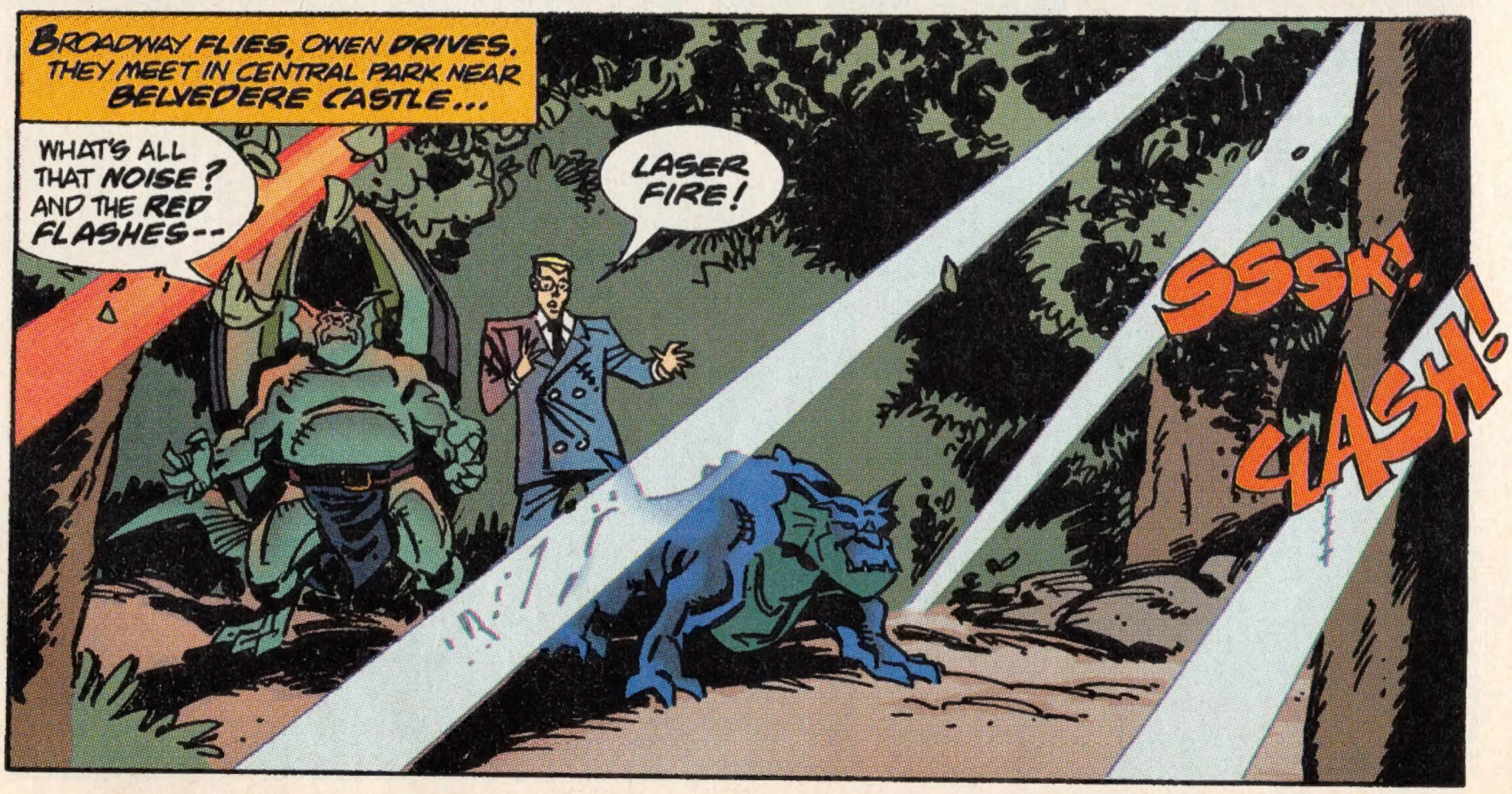

THE ONLY WAY TO COUNTERACT THE INFLUENCE OF THE ROSE IS TO UPROOT THE ENTIRE PLANT AND BURN ITS ROOTS IN THE LIGHT OF THE SAME FULL MOON UNDER WHICH THE ROSE'S POWER IS USED.

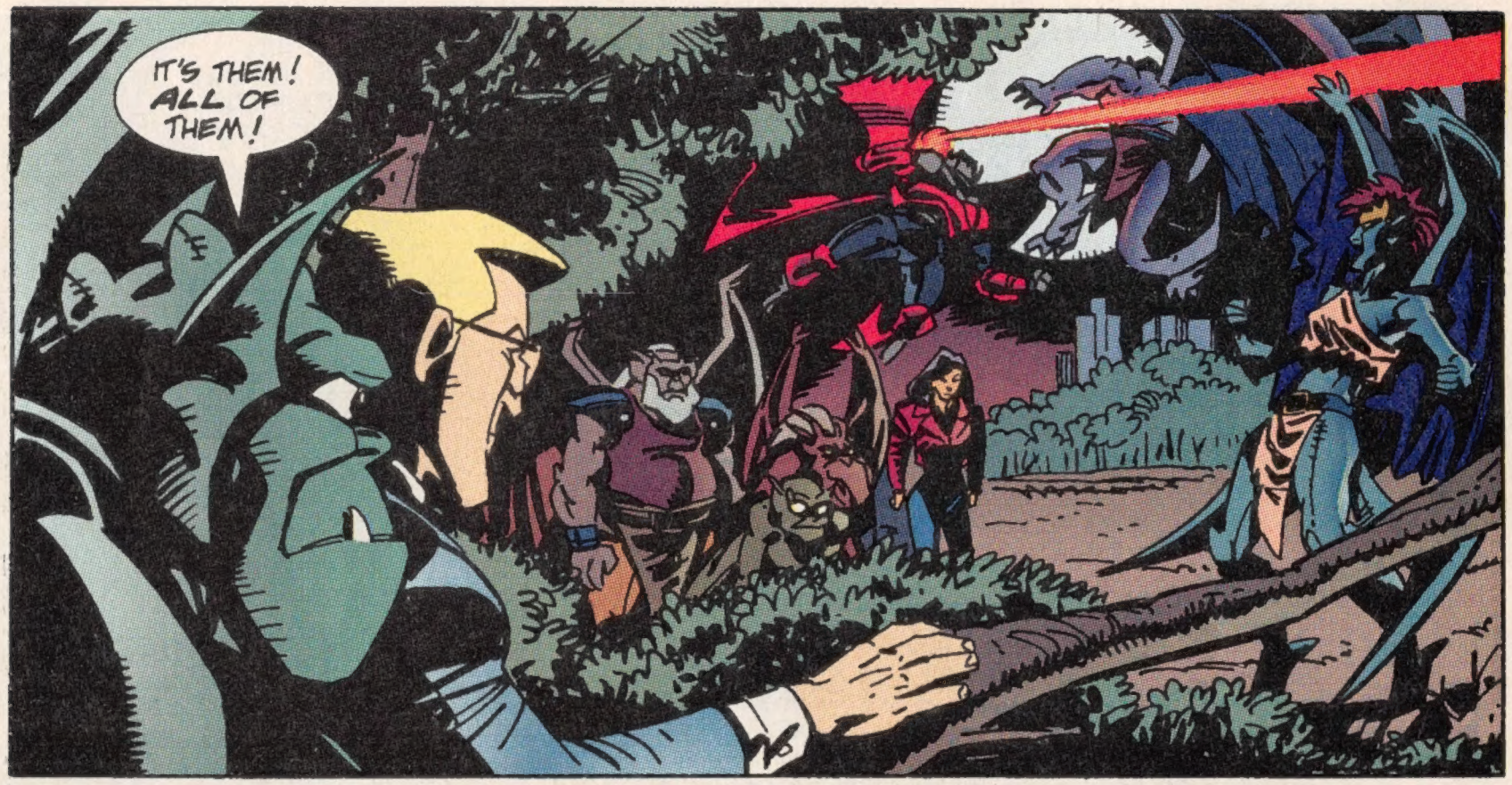
IN OTHER WORDS, WE HAVE TO FIND THAT PLANT AND BURN IT BEFORE THE SUN RISES!
OR WE'LL LOSE YOUR CLAN, DETECTIVE MAZA, AND MISTER XANATOS TO DEMONA--FOREVER.
THE QUESTION IS, HOW CAN WE FIND THE BUSH? IT COULD BE ANYWHERE.
WAIT! THIS IS LIKE A MYSTERY, RIGHT?
SO WE'VE GOT TO THINK LIKE DETECTIVES!
FACT--THE GRIMORUM SAYS THAT THE FEALTY ROSE ONLY BLOOMS IN THE LIGHT OF THE FULL MOON!
CONCLUSION? DEMONA CAN'T HAVE GONE FAR TO GET IT!
FACT--THE GRIMORUM ALSO SAYS IT GROWS ONLY ON ROYAL GROUND! ANY ROYAL GROUND IN NEW YORK?
TO MY KNOWLEDGE, NOTHING AUTHENTIC EXCEPT FOR THIS CASTLE, AND THE ROSE CERTAINLY DID NOT COME FROM HERE.

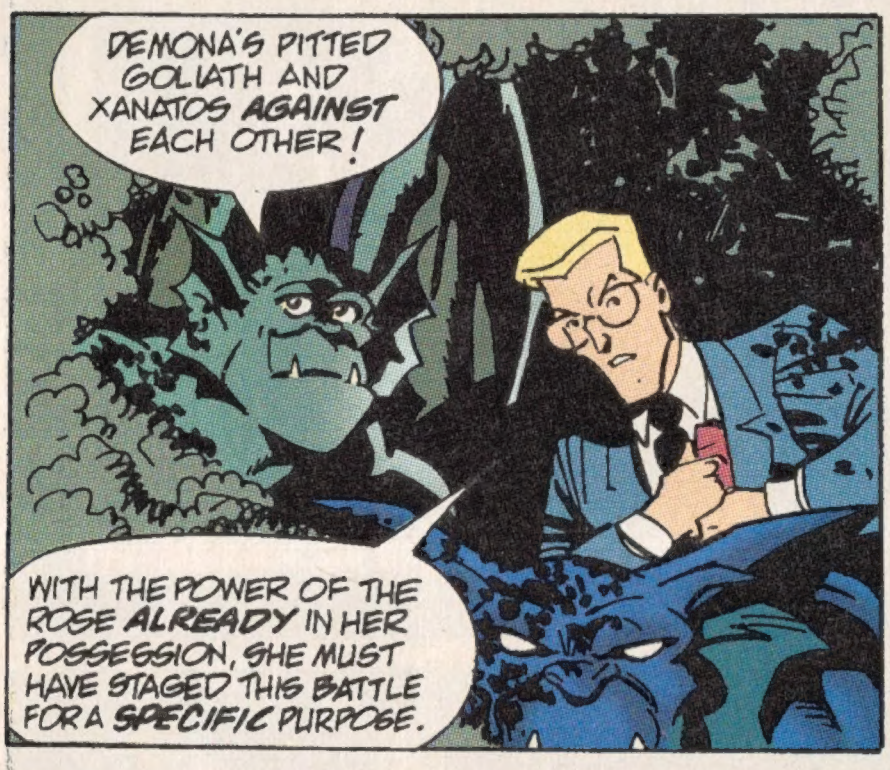
WAITAMINNUT--CASTLES! THERE'S A CASTLE IN CENTRAL PARK!
BELVEDERE CASTLE IS AN IMITATION, BUILT BY THE CITY MERELY FOR PUBLIC AMUSEMENT.

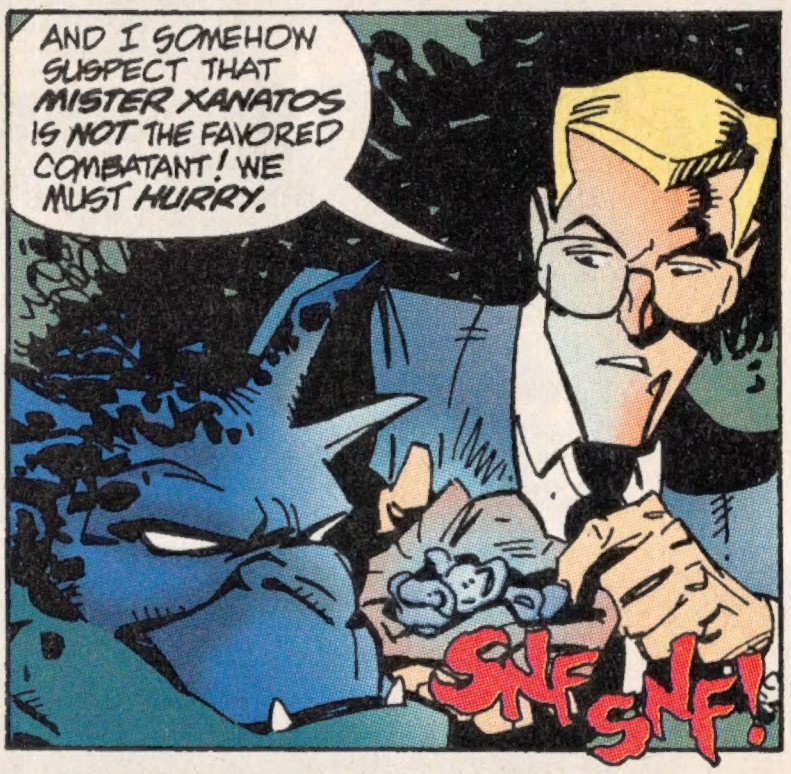
LOOK, THERE'S NOTHING IN THE GRIMORUM THAT SAYS THE ROYAL GROUND HAS TO BE AUTHENTIC, IS THERE? LET'S CHECK IT OUT!
WE CAN BRING BRONX-- IF THE ROSE IS THERE, HE'LL BE ABLE TO FIND IT!

THERE IS ONE COMPLICATION OF WHICH YOU SHOULD BE AWARE-- MISTER XANATOS' BATTLE ARMOR IS MISSING.
WHILE I WAS OCCUPIED WITH DETECTIVE MAZA DOWNSTAIRS, HE MUST HAVE RETURNED TO THE CASTLE AND TAKEN IT. NO ONE ELSE COULD HAVE GOTTEN PAST THE LOCKS.
OH, GREAT...

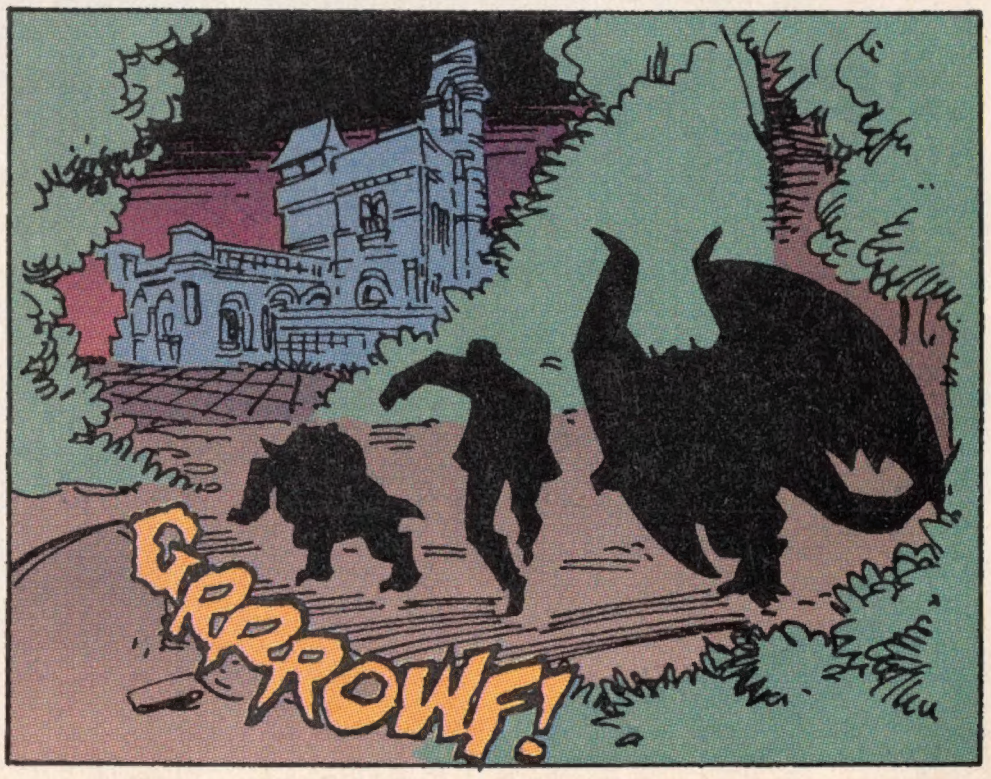

BROADWAY FLIES, OWEN DRIVES. THEY MEET IN CENTRAL PARK NEAR BELVEDERE CASTLE...
WHAT'S ALL THAT NOISE? AND THE RED FLASHES--
LASER FIRE!
SSSK!
GLASH!

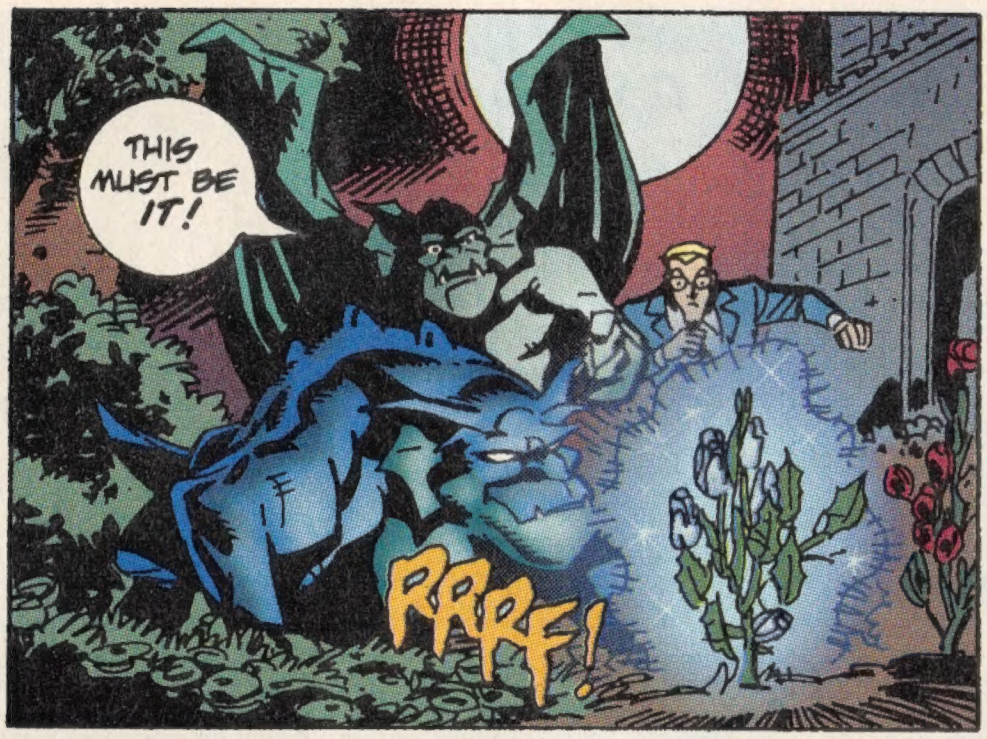

IT'S THEM! ALL OF THEM!


DEMONA'S PITTED GOLIATH AND XANATOS AGAINST EACH OTHER!
WITH THE POWER OF THE ROSE ALREADY IN HER POSSESSION, SHE MUST HAVE STAGED THIS BATTLE FOR A SPECIFIC PURPOSE.


AND I SOMEHOW SUSPECT THAT MISTER XANATOS IS NOT THE FAVORED COMBATANT! WE MUST HURRY.
SNF SNF!

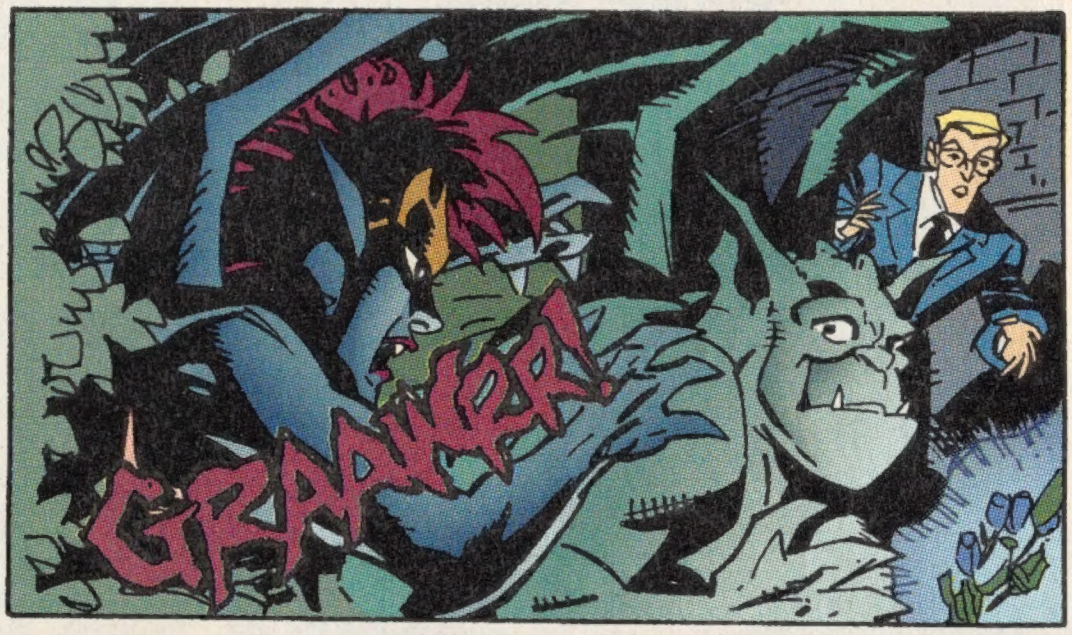
C'MON, BRONX, FIND THE SCENT! C'MON, BOY!
SNF WFFL!


GRRROWF!

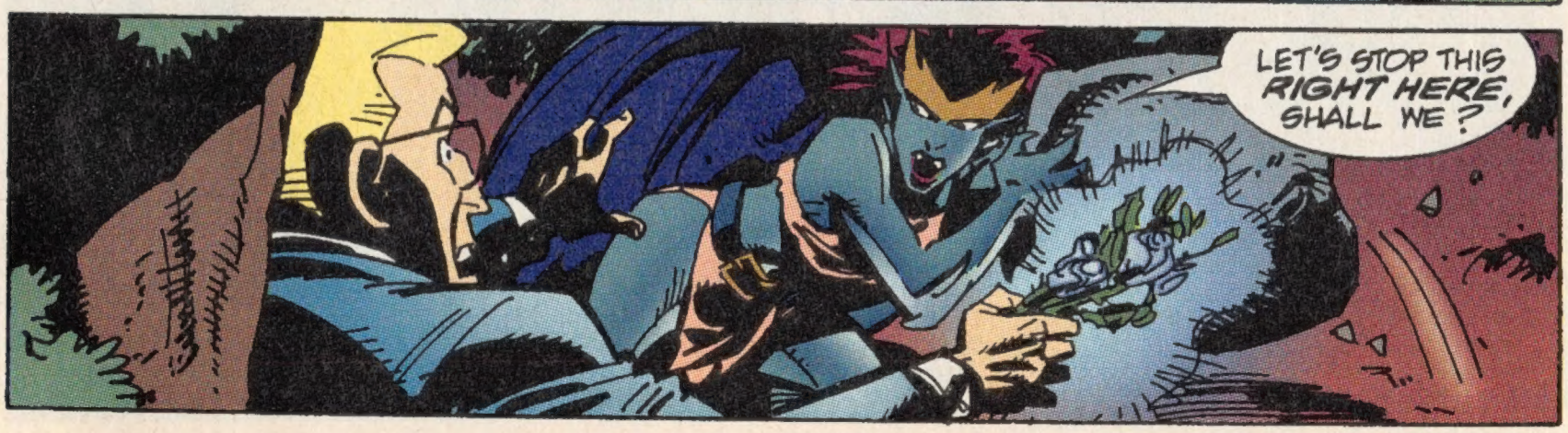

THIS MUST BE IT!
RRRF!

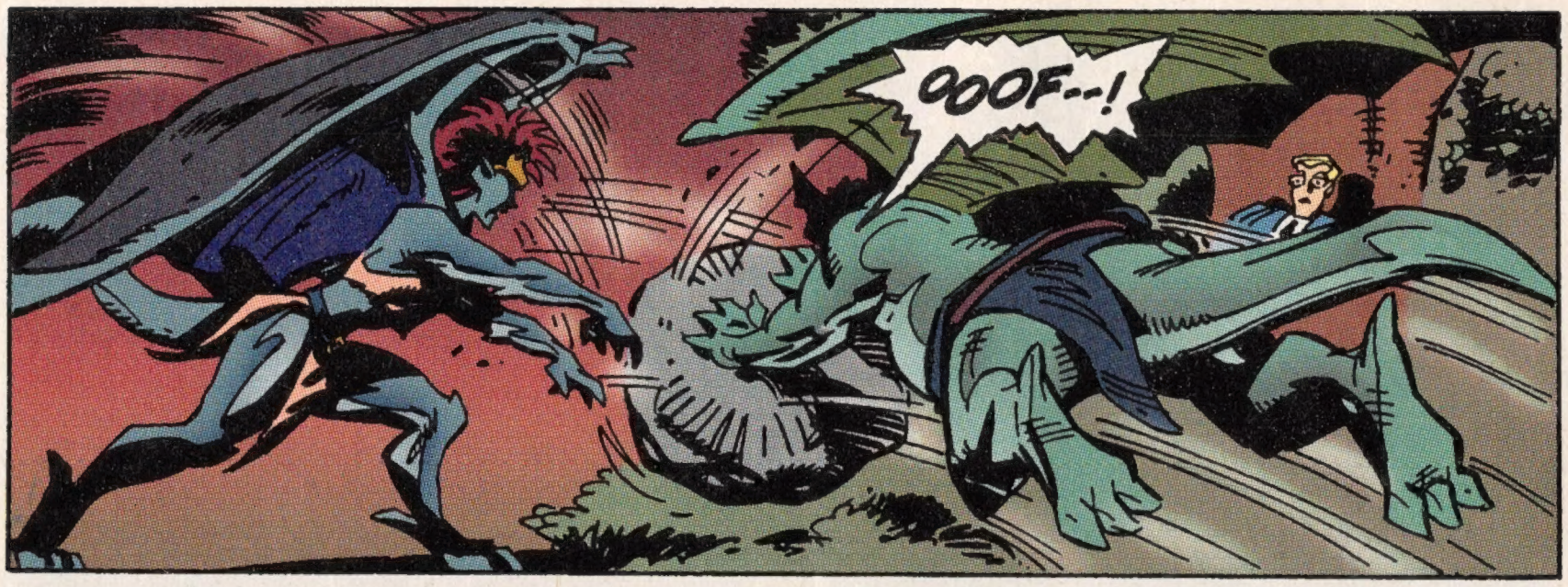
WE'LL HAVE TO RISK TAKING IT OUT INTO THE MOONLIGHT TO BURN IT! HOPEFULLY DEMONA WON'T SEE US--

TOO LATE! DEMONA ALREADY SEES YOU!


GRRAWGR!

SLASH!


LET'S STOP THIS RIGHT HERE, SHALL WE?


OOOF--!

THAT'S SOME ALLIANCE YOU'VE MADE, BROADWAY-- OWEN'S ABANDONED YOU!
BUT MY SERVANTS ARE FOREVER LOYAL!

COME TO MY AID, SERVANTS OF THE ROSE!

OWEN FLED THAT WAY! XANATOS, HUDSON, BROOKLYN-- STOP HIM!

ADMIT IT, BROADWAY-- YOU'RE OUTNUMBERED! YOU CAN'T WIN!

AND INDEED, THE SITUATION LOOKS GRIM...

STOP!

I...I HAVE TO... SHOOT YOU, OWEN... I CAN'T... STOP... MYSELF...!
I UNDERSTAND, SIR.

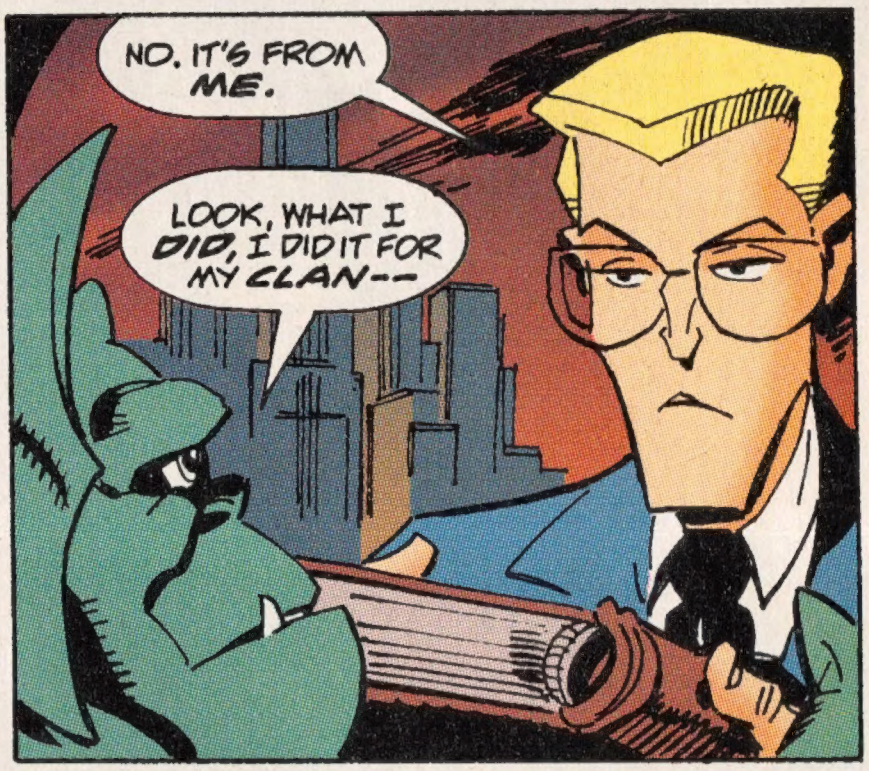
FLZZSHKT!
SHHKT!

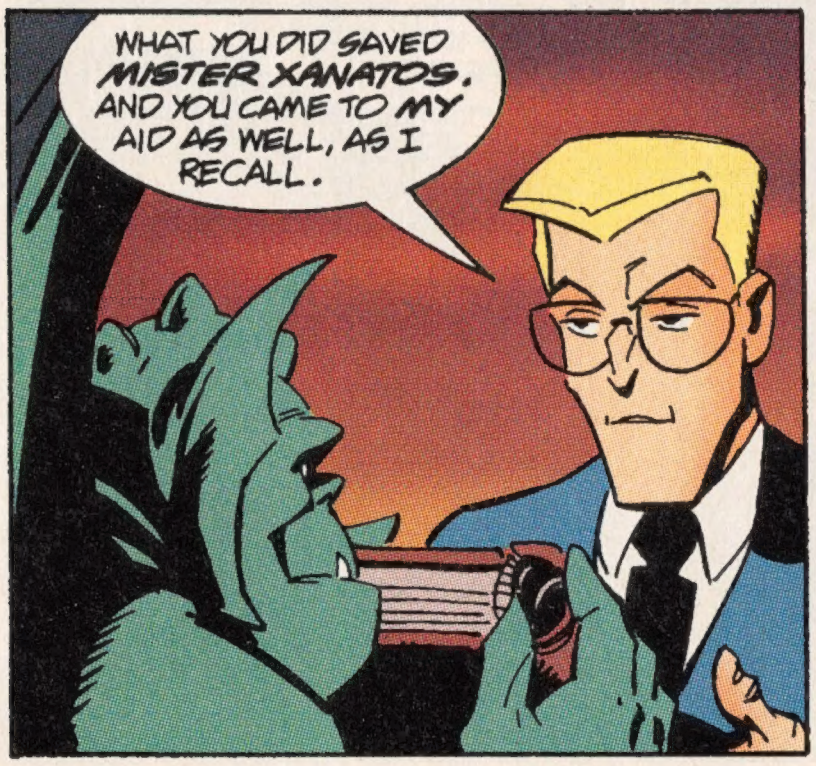
WHOA... DID WHAT I THINK JUST HAPPEN, JUST HAPPEN...?
I THINK SO, LAD. AN' IT WAS A CLOSE CALL.
GOOD JOB, OWEN.
YOU DESTROYED THE PLANT, SIR.
HMM. SO I DID.
WELL, THAT WAS QUICK, WASN'T IT? YOU'RE NO MATCH AGAINST US, BROADWAY--
--SO WHY NOT JOIN US?
NO!

THE SPELL HAS BEEN BROKEN, DEMONA. THE ROSE IS USELESS NOW.
IT IS YOU WHO HAVE LOST.
YOU WON'T STOP ME, GOLIATH! I WILL HAVE MY REVENGE!
NOT TODAY.
GRRR!
PERHAPS TOMORROW THEN, GOLIATH!
YOU HAVE OUR DEEPEST THANKS, BROADWAY. WELL DONE.
WELL DONE, MAYBE. EASILY DONE? NO WAY!

AND SO, SHORTLY BEFORE SUNRISE...
WHAT DID YOU WANT TO SEE ME ABOUT?

WHOA! IS THIS FROM MISTER XANATOS?
The ADVENTURES of SHERLOCK HOLMES
Arthur Conan Doyle

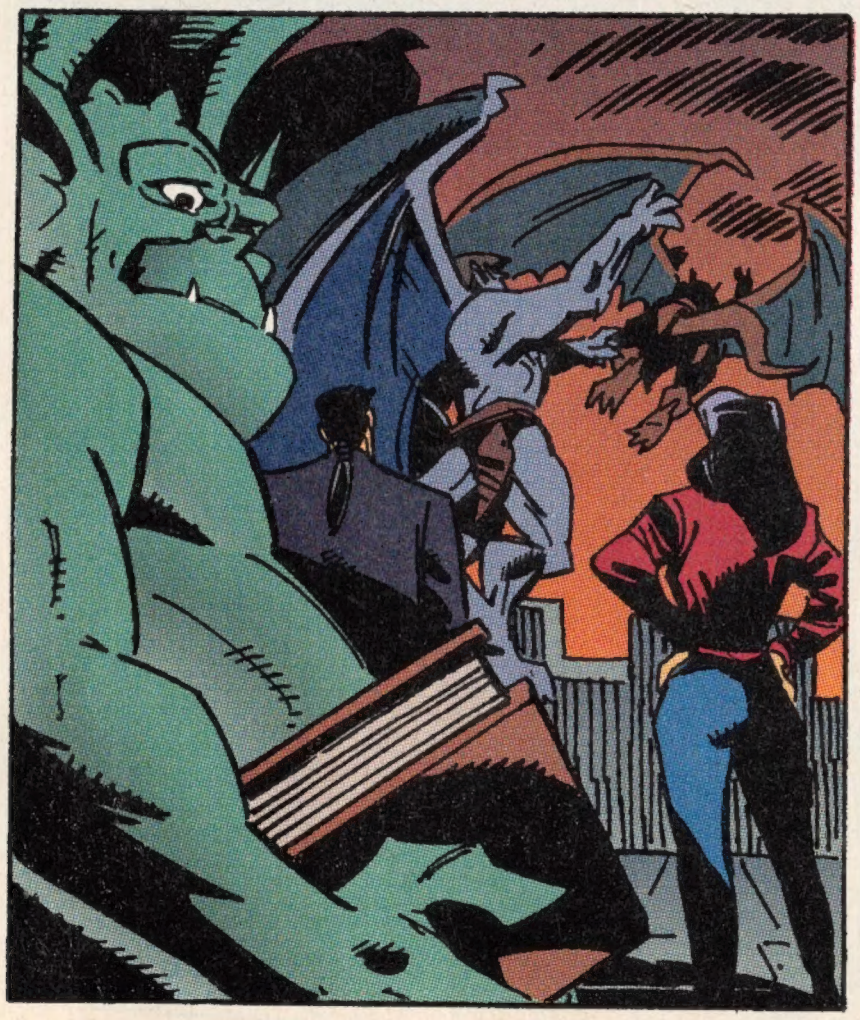

NO. IT'S FROM ME.
LOOK, WHAT I DID, I DID IT FOR MY CLAN--

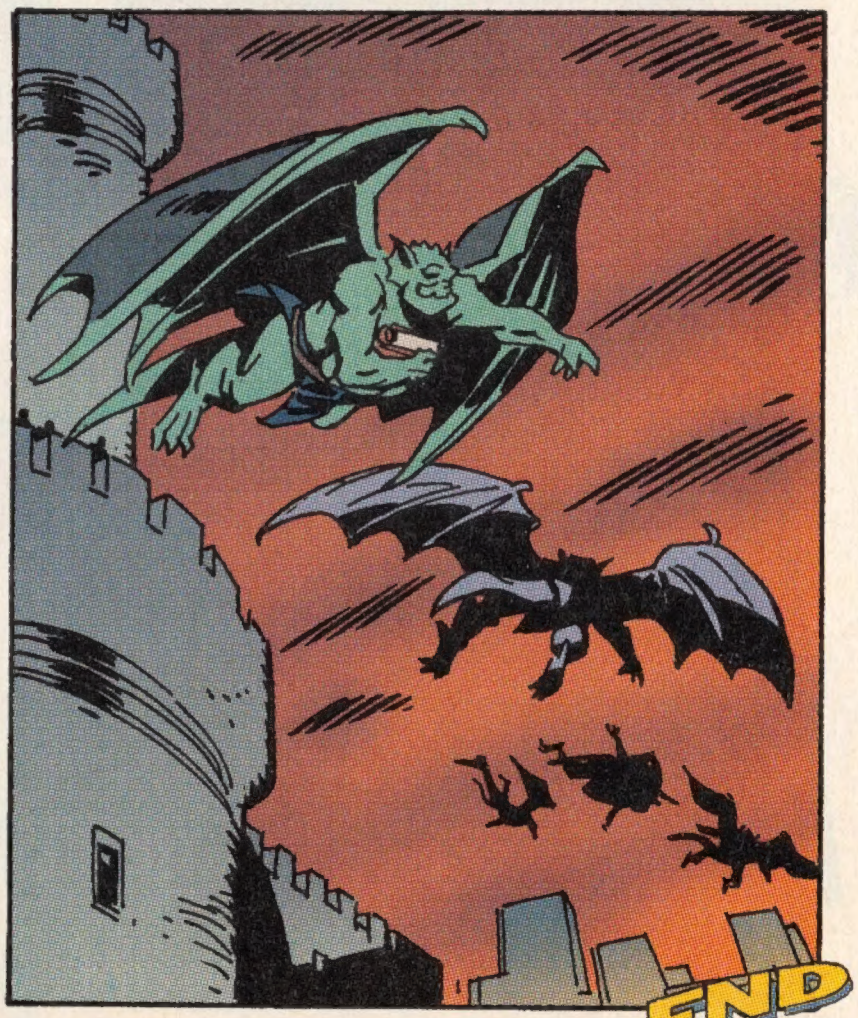

WHAT YOU DID SAVED MISTER XANATOS. AND YOU CAME TO MY AID AS WELL, AS I RECALL.

THEN WHY DO I GET THE FEELING THIS ISN'T A GIFT SO MUCH AS A... PAYMENT?

OH, I GET IT.
YOU DON'T WANT TO OWE ME, IS THAT IT?

YOU WOULD MAKE A FINE DETECTIVE, BROADWAY.

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